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Utah State Legislature

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April 22, 2008

Senator Michael G. Waddoups, Co-Chair
Representative Eric K. Hutchings, Co-Chair
Executive Offices & Criminal Justice Appropriations Subcommittee
State Capitol Complex
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114

Subject: Funding the Needs of Public Safety Dispatchers

Dear Chairmen:

The Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Interim Committee by motion requested at our April 16, 2008 meeting that your appropriations subcommittee make, as one of its interim study priorities this year, the issue of adequately funding public safety dispatchers.

We have watched the turnover rates increase and quality of personnel decrease as the payscale for these employees has slipped below market rates. In addition to looking at adequate payscales, staffing, and the costs of turnover, we suggest that you may also want to look at dispatch consolidation, adequacy of equipment for FCC's new bandwidth requirements, training, consistency of procedures between dispatch centers, adequacy of dispatch coverage in remote areas, and handling of non-emergency calls that come through 911.

We believe that the state's dispatch centers are understaffed adding to the stress and turnover of existing employees. We understand that the Utah Legislature has not funded a new Radio Dispatcher FTE since 1998. We are concerned that these conditions could lead to mishandled emergencies.

Please let us know how we can assist you.

Sincerely,

Jon Greiner, Senate Chair
Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Interim
Committee

DeMar "Bud" Bowman, House Chair
Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Interim
Committee

cc: Executive Appropriations Committee chairs